

You Found Me by vantablack

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: ALSO LET MIKE WHEELER DO ALL THE PROTECTING, Aged-Up Character(s), First Kiss, Gay Will Byers, M/M, MY TWO SONS ARE IN LOVE, Mild Hurt/Comfort, PROTECT WILL BYERS AT ALL COST, Pining Will, Protective Mike Wheeler, Slow Burn, Will-centric

Language: English

Characters: Dustin Henderson, Eleven (Stranger Things), Jonathan Byers, Joyce Byers, Lucas Sinclair, Mike Wheeler, Will Byers

Relationships: Will Byers & Mike Wheeler, Will Byers/Mike Wheeler

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2017-12-10

Updated: 2017-12-15

Packaged: 2022-04-03 14:48:25

Rating: Not Rated

Warnings: Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings

Chapters: 2

Words: 3,653

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

“Will you be my friend?”

That moment marked the beginning of a matchless friendship - the magnitude and effect of which to his life Will Byers couldn't possibly comprehend at that time.

Or, the story of how Will slowly but surely fell for his best friend Mike through the years.

1. Chapter 1

Author's Note:

My obsession with Stranger Things has completely taken over my life, and so, here you go. Enjoy!

Age 6

For most playgrounds Will Byers had ever been at, he's absolutely sure that swings were the biggest hit to kids his age. Children of all ages flocked the swings all the time. The oldest children would always get the first round (because they're *older*, as if that statement actually solves everything), followed by a line of smaller, hopeful kids awaiting their turn to experience the glee of gliding to and fro in the air.

Not in Hawkins Kindergarten, though.

Not at all.

Will Byers sat at the wooden plank of the swing alone, gripping its chains while watching the rest of his classmates conquer the small patch of lawn for a fun game of tag. He felt a little hurt, to be honest, in hearing squeals of laughter from the other side of the playground. But he told himself that it's going to be okay. After all, this was simply the first day of school, and he's still got all year-round to make friends with them.

Will was going to have *fun* with this swing, despite being by himself, and he would come home with a big smile for his mom, dad, and Jonathan. He would tell them exactly how exciting his first day in kindergarten went.

A minute or two went by, and Will still hadn't made any effort to move his swing yet.

Being alone on his first day of school came as no surprise to Will, really. He was reserved for someone his age, and his preference in clothing (*too* colorful, as they would say) didn't help much in the

situation either. Will having no friends in the entire neighborhood could attest to that.

Determined to enjoy the remaining time for recess, Will, then, made the deliberate choice of moving from his seat on the swing to the other side, facing a nearby thick rose bush, with his back towards his classmates instead. He could still hear the stomps of the rest of the children and their laughter, but at least, his line of vision was replaced with beautiful red roses poking out of the greenery.

There, much better.

He was in the middle of mentally choosing which of his 124 crayons at home would best capture the color of the red roses (*Brick Red? Maroon? Carnation Pink?*) when a light tap on his shoulders diverted his thoughts.

It's a boy.

A boy with a thick mop of curly, black hair and a pale face with sharp cheekbones dusted with freckles. He was wearing a hideous Christmas sweater, puzzling Will as it's nowhere near that time of year, and his eyes. Brown, determined, and staring at Will with dizzying focus.

"Will you be my friend?" the boy spoke, voice teetering with anxiousness, and yet his eyes, still unrelenting as ever.

The question sent tingles through Will's body, because *never* in his whole life has he been asked to be friends with someone. He was always alone, almost getting used to the fact that that's how his childhood was going to be like. Truth be told, if ever he would say yes to this kid, the boy would be his first ever friend. Well, aside from Jonathan, but he's his brother, so he doesn't count.

Friend. The thought made him warm inside. From that alone, Will decided it was a no-brainer.

"Yes.

The boy in front of him suddenly broke a blinding smile, as if Will's reply singlehandedly vanished the boy's apprehension earlier. The

smile turned into a full-blown giggle, and then he extended his arm, offering his palm for Will to shake. Will took it without hesitation, their equally firm grips, eliciting a unique, cheerful feeling inside Will.

“I’m Mike.”

“Hi, Mike. I’m Will.”

“Do you want me to give you a push? Mike, his new and apparently *amazing* friend, asked so enthusiastically, gesturing to the motionless swing Will was sitting on. Will’s a little small as a six-year-old, and it was only then that it dawned on him that the swing was too high for him to reach the ground completely for momentum, and yes, he definitely wanted that push.

Will was so overwhelmed with happiness that he almost wanted to cry.

“Yes, please,” he said, hoping that his new friend wouldn’t take notice of his eyes turning slightly glassy from unshed tears. Mike immediately took hold of the seat from behind him and slowly began pushing and pushing, until Will’s up in the air, his neat hair getting windswept by the second, laughter bubbling from the funny feeling in his stomach.

As the swing came to a natural stop, Will quickly stood up, exhilaration still pumping through his veins, and said, “Your turn, Mike.”

“Okay.”

Mike smiled.

That moment marked the beginning of a matchless friendship – the magnitude and effect of which to his life Will Byers couldn’t possibly comprehend at that time.

It was a recess well-spent, momentous for the two boys minding their own business in that deserted part of the playground of Hawkins Kindergarten. They took turns with the swing more than they could count, talked about their favorite things (Will, his 124 crayon set

from Mom, and Mike, his new R2D2 and C3PO stuffed toys from Aunt Martha) and what they would like to be when they are older (Will wants to be a painter; Mike wants to be an astronaut, much to Will's delight) and many other topics that poked their interest.

The two boys even walked side by side towards the classrooms as Mrs. Wormwood announced the end of recess and the continuation of classes. Further, Mike ditched his cool spot by the window to sit beside Will in the back. It left Will smiling for the rest of the day.

The school bell rang one more time, signaling the end of every kindergartener's first day of school. Children of all sizes and color carrying hefty backpacks sprang from classroom doors, slowly but surely filling the hallways. One by one, every child had paired off with a parent or a guardian at the designated waiting area.

A little too soon for Will's liking, Mike's mom arrived, smiling and waving at his son, gesturing the boy to get in the car. Will couldn't help but feel that this might all disappear once Mike leaves him at this place – the one good thing that he has right now, this budding friendship with Mike. His mind was reeling with worry that Will didn't notice that he was holding on to the other boy's sleeve.

"See you tomorrow, Will?" Mike said, with the most reassuring voice he could muster. And with only that, Will was at peace again.

"See you tomorrow, Mike."

It was a good five minutes after Mike left before Will saw his mother's car pull up in the school's driveway. He wasn't even inside the car and properly seated when Joyce flooded him with questions of how his first day went, much to his amusement. As they drove home, he babbled about his teacher and her big, thick glasses, the cool playground, their homework for tomorrow, and *most importantly*, his new friend Mike.

Before the day ended, Will completely forgot the beautiful rose bushes in the playground that he planned to draw.

He sketched his first ever friend instead.

2. Chapter 2

Notes for the Chapter:

2k words for you, lovely reader.

Age 9

Part 1

Mike changed Will's childhood for good. Ever since he and Mike became best friends, his days were brighter and better. He was never alone now, not with Mike bringing in his cool neighbor Lucas to the group and the welcome addition of the ever-charming Dustin in the 4th grade. The four of them were inseparable, a tight-knit group cemented by their common interests in elaborate board games, science and technology, fiction, and biking, and held even more so by their individual strengths.

At 9 years old, Will's happier than ever before.

A little too wise for his age, Will knew that it could only go downhill from there. There's no other way. He's anticipating the turn at any moment of a given time, but he never expected it to start with a ceramic mug.

A broken, ceramic mug, to be specific. A piece of broken glass that set off a temper, snowballing into a horrible disposition Will couldn't, for the life of him, understand.

Crash.

The quiet buzz of the coffeemaker early in the morning was overthrown by the loud crash in the Byer's household. Will, having been awake the whole night for today's science fair, lost control and slipped from the support of his arm on the kitchen table. It was a vain fight against sleepiness, inevitably tipping Dad's cup of coffee, sending it spiraling to the tiled floor.

"Goddammit, Will!" His father dropped the day's newspaper and

screamed at him not a second later, Will suddenly jolting from his dazed state to unbelievable alertness in such a blinding speed it made him go slightly dizzy.

“I-I’m sorry, dad. I—“

Will stuttered, looking around him to seek help, only to find no one. Mom was out to pick up last minute materials for their science fair display and Jonathan was already at school, agreeing to help Dustin and Lucas put up their boards.

“You useless piece of shit,” Lonnie’s face was in an alarming shade of red that Will has never seen before. Suddenly, he stood from his seat, only to grab both of Will’s skinny arms in a vice grip, squeezing harder and harder and harder and *it hurt*. He shook Will like a rag doll in time with a slew of foul words Will had never dreamed of hearing.

Will was terrified. He was glued to the spot, eyes wide open, no choice but to accept his father’s screams and attack. It took him a few seconds to get out of whatever zone he was stuck in, his adrenaline allowing him to escape from his father’s clutches through a handful of squirming and pushing.

Only as he did so, Will completely lost his balance and fell on the floor, breaking the fall with his open palms as a reflex.

He still couldn’t look away from the man in front of him. He didn’t know this man, this was definitely not dad – it *couldn’t* be. While he has never been supported his fondness for drawings and his colorful shirts, his dad took him to baseball games and taught him how to ride a bike. He wouldn’t hurt Will. Never.

I have to get out of here quick.

Will did not waste another second and flew. Grabbing his bag from the couch, he sped through the house and to the porch, scrambling to get his bike upright.

Will made it about five feet away from the house before he felt a sting when he gripped the handlebars tighter. He let go of the

handles to check his palms and swerved at what he saw.

They were covered in blood and tiny shards of glass. *Oh god.*

Will had no time to mind the cuts, his body internally shouting a continuous *get out of here, get out of here*. It hurt to wipe the blood on his windbreaker, but he silently hoped the sight wouldn't look too noticeable.

Will pedaled faster and faster away from their house and his father with no specific destination in mind. He was sweating profusely, hands and arms hurting like hell, but it didn't overpower the pain and betrayal that shook his whole being with what just happened.

He felt like he was going to cry.

Out of the woods and into the main road, Will tried his best to stop tears from bursting forth, but he was helpless. The harsh words his father yelled and the tight, bruising grip that locked his arms were on repeat in his mind. Fast, but not fast *enough*, tears streamed down his face, blurring his vision.

Will was breathing hard and fast by the time he came to a full halt. He took in his surroundings and realized he's at the opposite side of town, away from school.

Maple Street.

"Mike."

Will uttered to no one, and the name—just the very name of his best friend felt like an instant shelter from a terrible storm.

He composed himself; he had no idea why the road led him to the Wheeler's household, though he was thankful that it did. Mike was *safe*. He came down from his bike, deciding to walk the remaining steps towards Mike's house to calm himself down. His feet felt like solid iron as he trudged the pavement, his inner self debating whether to go and tell Mike what happened or to just keep it to himself.

It was futile – trying to guess which of the two options was better. Of

course, Will didn't want to worry anyone, especially Mike. He had a lot on his plate already. He didn't need to know. It was still not sinking in for him, to be honest. He would simply ask Mike to bike with him to school. He just wanted to see him and get a sense of normalcy in the middle of this chaos.

Will practiced his smile. Once. Twice.

Will finally scrubbed his tears, grunting at the sting from his palms and the pain from his arms, and took one lungful of breath before knocking at the Wheeler's door.

It opened instantly.

His best friend was in front of him and Will wanted nothing but to throw his arms around Mike and cry his heart out, but he stopped himself from doing so. He couldn't bear to burden Mike with this.

"Will?"

"Hey, Mike. I just thought, maybe, if y-you wanted to go to school together?" Will stammered, his smile not reaching his eyes. He inwardly cursed himself for not trying harder.

Mike gave him a once over, and then Will witnessed how Mike's pleasantly surprised expression straightway turned into something serious.

"My room. Now," Mike's tone was commanding, leaving absolutely no room for argument. Will felt goosebumps. If he wasn't Mike's best friend, he'd probably back down. But, well, he held that title since kindergarten.

"We have to go. The fair—"

"Screw the fair. Leave the bike. My room, Byers. Now," Mike repeated, his form hurried in leaving the porch to go back inside, upstairs to his room.

Will followed behind, mumbling a good morning to Mr. and Mrs. Wheeler when Mike's mom greeted him from the dining table. Mrs. Wheeler gave him a smile, wiping crumbs off of Holly's lips, Mr.

Wheeler grunting behind the newspaper in acknowledgment, and Nancy seemingly happy with breakfast without Mike annoying him.

Nothing like the family he left at home. The thought was like a punch in the gut.

Mike's room was nothing like the mess of a basement their group always hang out in. In Mike's room, everything was in its right place – every toy and book and sock. The blue wallpaper enveloping the walls gave off a calming, relaxing vibe that left Will wondering who between Mrs. Wheeler and Mike chose the beautiful color.

“Sit,” Mike asserted, gesturing to his bed. He still had a serious face on, and it was times like these when Will inadvertently ponders how Mike naturally assumed the role of a leader of their little band of friends.

Will gave in to the request, but only to say in turn, “You know, they'd kill us if we're late to the science fair today. Dustin will have a fit.”

Mike turned and heaved a grunt, closing the door before facing Will again with that look. Will swallowed as a reflex.

“Don't make me get it out of you, Will. Just tell me what happened, okay?” Mike said slowly, but Will could tell he was on edge.

“It's nothing. Let's just go.”

“No, it's not. You're obviously shaken up, and I'm not just gonna stand here and pretend you're doing okay,” Mike prodded. He bit his lip, clearly thinking about his next move (Mike's habit as Will observed through the years). Will began to pray that Mike would drop the subject and that they would leave for school soon. He didn't want Mike to see him cry. He's almost ten, for crying out loud. Best friend or not, Will didn't want anyone to see him cry. He's been labeled weak and weird enough as it was.

Will went out of his stupor when suddenly, Mike kneeled in front of him with a small box on his lap.

Mike took his hands in his, turning them slowly so that Will's wounded palms were in his line of sight. If Mike was surprised, he

didn't show it. He simply opened the lid of the box (apparently it's a small first-aid kit), took out an antibacterial spray, some wet wipes, and bandages.

Ever so gently, Mike started cleaning the blood from his hands and Will might just cry.

"Look, I'm not gonna force you to tell me if you don't want to. But at least tell me if you're hurting anywhere else. *Please*," Mike begged, his eyes locked with Will's, full of fierce determination and protectiveness Will wasn't sure he truly deserved.

"Please."

And Will couldn't say no to that.

"I slipped at breakfast this morning and landed on a broken mug," Will whispered, eyes not meeting Mike's searching ones. It wasn't technically a lie since that's exactly what transpired. Well, minus the tiny detail about his father. Will wasn't sure he wanted to tell anybody about it. It hadn't sunk into him yet.

"If that's what you say it was, then I believe you. Just take care of yourself better for me, alright, Byers?"

"Okay."

"Your hands, especially. I'd kill for hands as talented as yours, you know."

Mike sighed, fingers lightly roaming and touching Will's open palms, searching for possible shards left on his friend's skin. Finding none, the shushing of the antibacterial spray filled the room, before Mike finally applied the Super Mario bandaids Will knew he was saving for emergencies.

"There, all done. I should probably give up my job as Dungeon Master and be a Healer or a Mage," Mike said jokingly, ruffling Will's bowl cut. The mood instantly lightened, earning a chuckle from Will himself.

"You'd be a terrible Healer."

“Excuse me? Have you seen your perfectly cleaned and wrapped palms?” Mike said disbelievingly.

“If you’d become our Healer, then we’d never make it out alive of Lucas’ 18-hour campaign. Both in the game itself and in real life,” Will argued.

“Not in this life will I approve of that 18-hour gameplay, Byers. Not while I’m alive,” Mike assured, taking his backpack from the floor, prompting Will to do the same.

“Are you sure you’re okay, Will?” Mike asked one last time, before stepping out the door.

“Yeah. I’m okay. Thank you, Mike,” Will nodded. His arm and his palms still hurt but he felt infinitely better now. As an afterthought, he kept in mind that he had to thank Mike better for this someday. He wouldn’t know what to do without him.

The two boys scrambled downstairs as Mike glanced at his wristwatch and saw that it was almost 8 AM. They said their hasty goodbyes to the Wheeler family, stepped out of the house to grab their respective bikes. Everything was okay now at least temporarily (the whole thing still felt *off*), but when Will gripped his handlebars, the sting from his palms was a little too much that he couldn’t help a gasp from escaping his lips.

Mike, ever the observant kid, took notice and immediately dropped his bike to check on Will. Sensing that Will flinched at the action, Mike took a step back and calmed himself before carefully holding Will’s hand again for a surprise inspection.

Will’s ears went red from the attention.

“It’s bleeding again.”

“It doesn’t hurt as much as it looks.”

Mike rolled his eyes at the blatant lie. Will didn’t think he would buy it, but he just had to get that out there for Mike to stop worrying. Mike let go of Will’s hand, taking Will’s bike and started walking it towards their shed.

“What are you doing?” Will asked.

“You’re riding with me, today, Byers.”

The finality of Mike’s tone sent Will all warm on the inside. The kind gesture was so *Mike*; there’s no denying that, and it effortlessly elicited strong feelings from Will. Will was so grateful that Mike was preoccupied fixing his bike to the Wheelers’ shed. Else, he would have seen Will rub his hands on his eyes to stop tears from coming out.

Mike climbed onto his bike, stopped in front of Will with a huge smile.

“At your service.”

Will masked the thankfulness and joy bubbling from inside him with a huff. “So, which is it Mike, a Healer or a Knight?”

“I can be both. But if I’m a knight, that makes you a princess,” Mike replied as Will took a seat on the bike rack. He thought of placing his hands on his shoulders but decided to wrap it around Mike’s torso instead. Mike was soft to embrace, his jacket smelling like flowers.

“Is this okay, Mike?” Will shyly asked, Mike doubling his usual effort in pedaling the bike.

“Yeah, it makes sense. I mean, you grip my shoulders, the pain would come back, right, princess?” Mike looked back with a grin.

“Like hell. I’m a fellow knight, wounded by battle. You’re helping me right now, but come midnight, I’ll sneak off and take the princess my own,” Will argued. Chuckling, the two boys sped through the road to school, the autumn wind hitting their hair and faces.

“Hold on tight, Will.”

And he did.

If Will hugged Mike tighter than what should have been that day, Mike didn’t mention it. If Mike noticed the wet patch on his jacket the same spot where Will rested his head throughout the ride, Mike

didn't say a word.

Notes for the Chapter:

I'm weak for protective!Mike and caring!Mike. Let me know what you think! :-)

Author's Note:

Thanks for reading, and kudos and reviews are greatly appreciated.